



## **Statement of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group**

**Vienna, March 20, 2008**

The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (Ambassadors Yuri Merzlyakov for Russia, and Bernard Fassier for France, as well as Mike Carpenter, Advisor to U.S. Co-Chair Matt Bryza) met with the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Vardan Oskanian in Vienna on the 14th of March and with the Azerbaijani Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov in Paris on the 15th of March.

After these meetings the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs recall that, as reiterated before the vote on the "Resolution on the Situation in the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan" at the UN General Assembly, France, the Russian Federation and the United States support the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and therefore do not recognize the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh, while holding that the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh is a matter of negotiations between the parties.

The Co-Chairs remain convinced that any peaceful and equitable settlement of the conflict will require unavoidable compromises among the parties. They underline the urgent need to resume the negotiations after the pause due to the presidential election in Armenia. In that respect, they note with satisfaction the affirmation of both Foreign Ministers of the need to continue the discussions between the sides.

The Co-Chairs proposed to the Foreign Ministers to organize the first meeting between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan as soon as possible. The Co-Chairs express their sincere hope that this meeting, accepted in principle by the two sides, will take place and lead to the resumption of negotiations for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of the Document on the Basic principles for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, presented to the sides on November 29, 2007 in Madrid before the opening of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

Finally, at a time when serious clashes resulting in the loss of life have occurred along the Line of Contact, the Co-Chairs urge both sides to refrain from unilateral and maximalist actions on the ground, at the negotiating table, as well as in their public rhetoric, and to fully and strictly comply with their obligations relating to the cease-fire.